September 24, 2012

Dear Amanda,

Thank you for the opportunity to observe you teaching your class about communication climate and defense mechanisms. Below I have listed some things to be sure to keep doing in the classroom and some things to think about for future classes.

Things to keep doing:

\*Very professional appearance. This enhances your overall credibility.

\*You exhibit a genuine enthusiasm and confidence.

\*Overall, you have created a supportive communication climate.

\*Good spacing of the class period with time for discussion/lecture, activity, and group time.

\*You do a great job of involving the class in your lecture by asking them for examples or explanations. I like how you called on particular students to get them involved in the discussion.

\*Checking on small group progress enhances the comfortable communication climate. You did a great job of answering questions and providing feedback during the small group activity. Need to do more of this.

\*Good debriefing/summary of the small group activity.

\*Awesome discussion about email and defensive communication. Very effective discussion about the importance of technology to our communication.

\*Excellent use of the board to preview the day’s activities and to provide reminders. Now, take a minute to verbally go through the material.

\*You have control of the classroom! You make sure that everyone is paying attention when others are speaking.

\*Passing our graded papers at the end of class is a very effective teaching strategy.

Things to think about for future classes:

\*Need a clearer thesis/preview statement. Think of the class session as a speech that needs to preview for the audience/students what is to come. This will help you and the students stay on task and stay organized. You can simply do this by reading what you have provided on the board.

\*Wait to collect the quizzes when everyone is done. The constant up and down is very distracting and allows students to cheat by looking on other’s papers.

\*Need to use the questions strategies in Simonds and Cooper. You began the discussion with, “Tell me something from the chapter.” Obviously, this question did not start a fruitful discussion and you had to ask another question.

\*Need to use the board or PowerPoint for visual learners. For example, list the defense mechanisms on the board as you define and illustrate them.

\*You must work on your “wait” time. You ask students a question and if someone doesn’t answer right away, you sometimes answer it yourself. Count to 10 (I know the silence is terrifying) and then rephrase the question or call on someone. If students know you will answer the question, they will never offer a response. Also, you say, “okay” when a student answers instead of providing specific feedback like, “Yes, that’s correct” or “no, that isn’t the correct answer”. See the Simonds and Cooper text for suggestions on how to improve your feedback.

\*At the beginning of the activity, walk around to each group to make sure they are doing the activity correctly and that they are learning one another’s names. Several groups seemed confused about the task. Have students say their names when presenting their “findings” in Gibb activity. This will help students learn one another’s names and enhance the overall supportive communication climate. This activity would be more effective if you define the Gibb pairings before the activity begins. This would only take a few minutes and would clarify these abstract concepts.

\*You said, “So” about 33 times and “you guys” about 6 times.

Overall, Amanda, you are doing a great job teaching 114. You are enthusiastic and professional. Please read through my comments and be sure to ask any questions. In the meantime, your students and I are lucky you are here teaching in the Communication Department.

Lisa